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ABSTRACT

Criteria that might be applied in judging success as a faculty member are discussed, including roles of instructional design (ID) and technology faculty. Criteria of success include promotion, tenure, salary, professional recognition, control over courses one teaches and other faculty assignments, consulting jobs, and "perks" (e.g., travel funds, secretarial support, and phone use and equipment). While the teacher may derive a sense of success from advising students and selecting courses/students to teach, it is difficult to assess how well a faculty member must teach and advise to be a success. On the other hand, it is easier to measure and reward scholarly activity. The quantity and quality of research, writing, and conference presentations is fundamental to success as a faculty member. Obtaining funds for research is often used as a measure of the teacher's scholarly performance. Participation in university-wide committees or highly visible professional activities are more likely to provide recognition and reward from the college. Many service activities, while satisfying, consume the teacher's time without producing recognition and rewards from the college. The expertise of instructional technologists and ID faculty is often sought for organizational support activities and development projects. The key to success is for ID and technology faculty to be careful in selecting these projects. (SW)

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Succeeding As a Faculty Member in an Instructional Design Program

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This article first defines criteria one might apply in judging success as a faculty member. The criteria are then examined in detail and their relative importance judged. The article concludes with suggestions for how to be successful and a plea to give a faculty position serious consideration.

What is Success?

Success can be defined using a variety of criteria depending on the individual and the environment. Thus, you may or may not agree with the analysis and conclusion presented in this article your success will depend on your personal goals and values and the college setting you have in mind. Also, the relative importance of each criterion may vary widely over your career. This article assumes the setting is a major academic institution and that you seek to be a high performer. Some degree of balance among several, but not necessarily all the criteria, is essential to any definition of success. Success is defined here only in terms of the individual, but individual success is linked to program success, a topic which, unfortunately, is beyond the scope of this article. We now turn to specific criteria.

Promotion and accompanying tenure are probably the sine qua non of success as a faculty member. Failure to achieve them results in non-renewal of appointment which, by any definition, is not success. Other common measures of success include salary, professional recognition, control of one's environment, consulting opportunities and various "perks" such as travel, supplies and equipment.

Salary tends to be a relative criterion since almost no faculty member enjoys a salary comparable to colleagues in commercial settings. In fact, it is common for new graduates in instructional design to take positions in industry at salaries higher than all but the senior faculty in the program from which they just graduated. However, within the university small differences in salary may occur from being an exceptionally high or low performer. Faculty tend to place great weight on even these small differences in salary as indicators of their success. Professional recognition by peers may also represent success. Election to office, invitations to serve on visitation teams and citations of ones works are some of the indicators of having

achieved professional recognition. Control of one's environment is a little less easy to define. No one has complete control of the environment, but the ability to select courses to teach, select advisees and choose R & D activities in which to participate are all indicators of the degree to which a faculty member controls the environment. Consulting may also rank highly as a measure of success. The amount, location, type of consultation, fee, and client all affect how a faculty is perceived by colleagues and administrators. Highly successful faculty are often considered to be those who make a lot of money consulting on innovative projects and consulting only with Fortune 500 companies. The final measure of success to be considered is perks. These vary among institutions but may include ample travel funds, secretarial support, phone use and equipment. Carpeting in one's office may also be considered a perk. Some perks such as equipment may affect professional performance while others, such as an office with a window, serve mostly to communicate to co-workers that one has succeeded.

We now turn to the typical activities of a university faculty member and how they related to these criteria of success. The three universal functions of teaching, scholarly activity and service along with organizational support and a somewhat unique activity of technology faculty; development projects, are examined.

Teaching

There are few activities which can compare with teaching in providing strong positive psychological reinforcement. Watching students learn and grow and realizing you are contributing to their development helps explain why many good faculty stay in universities rather than heed the call of larger salaries in business & industry. Of course, the psychological reward is largest when teaching students with whom one feels an affinity. These may be undergraduates, graduate majors or non-majors depending on one's preference. Being in a position to select what courses and which students to teach adds greatly to one's sense of success. Advising is another activity which can provide a sense of success. Working with bright, motivated advisees can be both intellectually stimulating and psychologically rewarding.

But how well must a faculty member teach and advise to be a success? The answer to this question depends on one's criteria. Unfortunately, in terms of promotion, tenure and salary one can be mediocre and still advance rapidly given other strengths. Being an outstanding teacher can provide great internal satisfaction. But average and even mediocre teachers receive about as many rewards from the university. The simple truth is that, short of being a total disaster in

the classroom, almost any level of performance that satisfies the faculty member is defined as success.

Scholarly Activity

In contrast to teaching, scholarly activity is the premier criterion for measuring and rewarding performance. The quantity and quality of research, writing and presentations at conferences is fundamental to success as a faculty member. New faculty must establish an active and productive agenda for publication. Publication in refereed journals and authorship of books are the two most valued outlets. Non-refereed national journals and book chapters are next in value with state level journals, presentations at conferences, monographs and other publications being least valued.

The key to survival for young faculty members is to get into print at all three levels to build up their bibliographies. Senior faculty may concentrate on the more valued outlets once they have received tenure and recognition.

Funded research is another valued activity at most universities. Interestingly, the mere obtaining of funds is often used as a measure of one's scholarly performance. Grants and contracts from prestigious agencies such as NSF, Carnegie, etc. are valued more highly than those from state agencies and "research" projects count for more than development or service contracts. But for faculty who want to get ahead, they all count.

Service

Service activities of faculty typically include serving on committees, working in professional organizations, non-fee consulting with schools and other agencies, engaging in organizational support and participating in development projects. Committee work is the bane of existence for most faculty, but all of us face the prospect of serving on one or more committees every year. Examples are program development, promotion and tenure, search, and grievance committees. The best advice give is to seek membership on university-wide committees, but keep careful control over other assignments to avoid consuming a lot of valuable time. Exceptions should be made for prestigious assignments such as Dean search or research proposal review committees. Faculty governance committees at most institutions are largely ceremonial and should be avoided like the plague unless up for promotion.

Much of what was said about committee work also applies to participating in professional organizations. Unless the activity brings visibility and is viewed by others as

significant and valuable (such as holding an elected office), a little goes a long way. Similarly, non-fee consulting should be carefully controlled. While the value to the recipient may be great and your sense of satisfaction high, the recognition and reward from the university are usually low. Moderation not abstinence is the watch word.

Organizational Support

Organizational support and participation in development projects are two areas in which there are unique demands on faculty in instructional design and technology. Demands on time arise due to the expertise instructional design faculty possess in analysis, production, evaluation and organizational change. ID faculty also have an action orientation and are used to working under short time lines and as part of a team. These skills are in short supply on most college faculties, hence the extra demands on ID faculty. Failure to recognize these unique conditions can be hazardous to your professional health.

Organizational support activities such as helping to establish a technology services center or conducting a needs assessment for a new degree program in another program area are often of great interest to college administrators. In seeking guidance and assistance they frequently turn to instructional technologists who are seen as having appropriate expertise. Faculty in other departments may also seek out technology faculty for advice and assistance in planning projects, selecting equipment and materials, producing instructional materials, designing facilities or designing project evaluations. While it may be gratifying to be sought out for your expertise, these request can become a bottomless pit consuming vast amount of time and producing little reward.

Development Projects

Development projects within one's department or even directed by you can create the same dilemma as request for organizational support. Managing one development project is an excellent professional experience. Managing a second and third rapidly decreases their value as a learning experience. To avoid the trap of becoming very busy doing other people's work (or even your own for that matter), participation in development projects must be carefully monitored. Here are some suggestions. One, pick projects which have high potential for publication and hence your visibility. Two, avoid large, long term projects unless the payoff is very high. Three, select those who's scope is within your immediate area of interest. Four, consider the location and how much time and logistical complexity remote sites adds to the project. Five, avoid the appearance of

conflict of interest between private consulting and university related projects. Six, consider the potential for student involvement as interns or employees. Seven, seek funds to hire a "go-fer" or project assistant to handle much of the routine associated with projects.

In summarizing the areas of organizational support and participating in development projects, the best advice is to use caution. Certainly the experience gained and contacts made can be invaluable. The key to success is judicious selection of what activities to participate in. Projects add to the vitality and excitement of an instructional technology department. They provide a source of financial support for students and credibility for the faculty. They also provide a proving ground for new R & D efforts and can keep faculty on the cutting edge. Unfortunately, they can also burn out faculty, trap them into a cycle of repetitive activity and grind them down with mindless detail. Striking a balance among these conflicting conditions is essential to long term success.

Conclusions

In conclusion, and with apologies to Norman Vincent Peale, the following advice is provided on how to be a success.

1. Balance competing demands. No single criterion of success can provide you with both psychological and financial satisfaction.
2. Guard time for scholarly activity. Young faculty should work on articles and presentations first and then move to books.
3. Do a credible job of teaching and advising. Your self respect and the reputation you build with students and alumni provide ample reward even if your institution does not.
4. Select development projects for their research and publication potential. Don't do a lot of projects from which you will not learn or publish (or both).
5. Bring in R & D money. Money talks.
6. Consulting for growth and profit. Seek consulting opportunities which provide for your professional growth and contracts.
7. Limit service activity. Some is necessary, but a little goes a long way.
8. Limit organizational support activity. See number seven above.
9. Go for the perks. Go especially for perks which will improve your productivity and/or visibility nationally (computers travel, telephone etc). Don't go after perks for show. They may make you a target for some of your colleagues.

I would like to add one final editorial thought. I hope this presentation has not convinced you to avoid a faculty position in higher education. Higher education is imperfect, but so is everybody's world of work. There are many happy, successful and relatively prosperous faculty in ID programs at major universities. Each is quite different in temperament, interest and activities. Yet all are highly successful by the criteria described earlier. I encourage you to become a faculty member (or stay in the profession if already there). These are exciting and challenging times and we need all the good minds we can get!